

Ask Ed NEWSLETTER

Finding the Profit in your Process

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ARE YOU PREPARED?

Emergencies come your way, when you least expect it. What can you do to be prepared....

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RECESSION OVER! REALLY?

It all hinges on how well we are able to control our costs and preserve our cash.

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ARE YOU PREPARED ?

Being prepared can mean life or death for someone!



There are time when I struggle to write an article. I have an idea for what I want to write, but the words just don't show up, and there the idea sits. Sometimes, there is a reason as was the case this month.

Last week, we took my Dad out for a trip through the mountains. At 92, he still enjoys his picnic lunches amid those tall peaks, and is on a constant lookout for

any wildlife. Our route took us through Kananaskis country – a beautiful drive though some high elevations where there are always animal sightings. We had just finished lunch, and continued our journey south on Highway 40 when I spotted a car stopped ahead. There is very little traffic this far down the road – particularly on a Friday, and it isn't unusual to see a car stopped because of goats or sheep on the road. As I slowed down, it was apparent that this time was different. And that's when I grabbed the first aid kit. We were second on the scene of a motorcycle accident.

Ian, a gent in his early 40s was out for a leisurely ride when a goat jumped from the ditch to cross the road. There was no time to react, and Ian caught the goat broadside, which was launched back to the side of the road. He was separated from his bike and he slid about 50 feet – his bike traveling considerably further. Another couple had seen the accident in their mirror – they had seen the goats on the side of the road, and were just checking as they passed when they saw Ian go down. They had a basic first aid kit and were busy dressing a gash on Ian's leg when we arrived.

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My Cars First Aid Kit:

- ☞ First aid manual, including basic CPR instruction
- ☞ Stretch bandages
- ☞ Sterile gauze rolls
- ☞ Gauze pads / Telfa pads
- ☞ Tubi-gauze
- ☞ Abdominal pad
- ☞ Pressure dressings
- ☞ Adhesive tape
- ☞ Adhesive bandages
- ☞ Steri-Strips
- ☞ Antiseptic wipes
- ☞ Hydrogen Peroxide
- ☞ Antibiotic cream
- ☞ Merthiolate applicator
- ☞ Triangular bandage (sling)
- ☞ Tweezers / Forceps
- ☞ Sharp scissors and Knife
- ☞ Latex gloves
- ☞ Liquid green soap
- ☞ Acetaminophen
- ☞ Insect sting relief pads
- ☞ Saline solution and Eye wash
- ☞ Moist towelettes/wipes
- ☞ Insect repellent and Sunscreen

Accidents Happen by Chance.

While I'm not going into the details of what who did what, when, I am going to mention that in this remote part of the park, help was an hour away. A car was sent in each direction to find the nearest phone to call for help. Forty five minutes later, the first to arrive was a park ranger who was well trained and well equipped to stabilize Ian and secure the scene (we used our cars as a barricade to ensure that we wouldn't be caught in a second accident). The ambulance was about 15 minutes later.

So here's my question for you. Accidents, by their very definition, happen by chance. There is no planning one, and no predicting when one might occur. In your plant, you take (hopefully) all kinds of precautions to prevent them from happening in the first place. But in my experience, in spite of the best training, and the best protection, sometime bad things happen to nice people. People forget, or have a moment where they are distracted and they forget about the dangers around them, or they "think" they can still do something safely, even though they are well aware that it's a really dumb idea. That's when they are most vulnerable. Are you prepared?

There are requirements set out by Occupational Health and Safety that mandate how much and how many you need – how many people trained in first aid, and to what level, how much is in your first aid kit, and so on. These are MINIMUMS, and need to be treated as such. If you are just following the minimum, chances are that you are not prepared. And that just covers you in the plant.

How about when you leave the plant? We have two children, and while the oldest rarely got hurt, the youngest, Matt was a different story. He fell off the swing set, jumped actually, when he was five, and fell awkwardly. He managed to shear off the ball joint of his elbow. He fell out of a tree he was climbing, and landed on his back, and the back of his head. He fell off his bike, (yes he was wearing a good helmet) and suffered some abdominal injuries, and he managed to put a chisel through his hand in shop class – something that really woke him up to the safe handling of tools now that he is in the trades. Do you have the knowledge, the training, and the basic materials to know what to do, and to be able to do it? How about every employee that works for you? Do they have the knowledge and the ability to deal with emergencies when they happen. I say "when", because I don't believe that it's "if they happen". I travel a lot, and in my years have been first on the scene of two other car accidents – one where the driver fell asleep in Northern Ontario and drove into a granite rock face, and a second where the driver hit the ditch. Both were remote, both were at night, or very early morning, and both entailed a long wait before "professional" help arrived.

Following our diversion last week, I realized that even my preparedness wasn't up to par. I have been traveling with a mediocre First Aid kit – it has a good supply of the basics, but that's all. I have a much more complete kit for the car, but it was back at the house, somewhat depleted over the years. Now it's fully restocked and ready should the need arise.

Tips to Ensure You're Prepared

Safety Manual for the plant

First Aid course

Safety inspection at home / plant

PM in the plant

Defensive Driving Course

In the back country, know where you are, and carry a radio

Safety Drills

First Aid kit – car / home

Regular Maintenance

Car serviced – tires/brakes



Clinging to Life

Two weeks ago, it was officially announced that the recession is over!



Last week, Alberta Finance Minister, Iris Evans announced 'not so fast'. Natural gas prices are "in a funk" and the price of oil is still hovering around \$60 US a barrel.

Sunday, the seasonally adjusted unemployment rates for July were released – Alberta is currently at a 13 year high of 7.2%. Calgary is at 6.8% and Edmonton is at 7.4% - all showing further increases over June.

A report published Monday claims that there is no relief insight for the depressed energy services industry. If you think the recession is over, think again! All the signs are pointing to a period of slow growth for the foreseeable future. And since it's our economy is tied directly to the economy of the world – we truly are a global economy – then we aren't over this yet.

I was in Ontario a couple of weeks back and while I was walking along the lakeshore, I spotted a tree that was literally hanging on for dear life. The bank that used to be its home, that used to be safe and secure, has now washed away leaving its roots exposed and its chances of survival virtually eliminated. How many of us in business are in the same predicament as this tree? Perhaps not as far gone, but in trouble none the less. The erosion of the lakeshore didn't happen overnight. The erosion of our business, and our cash flow hasn't happened overnight either, but the recession is taking its toll.

There is one significant difference though. Unlike the tree, we are fully capable of altering our outcome. We can change our circumstances to reduce the erosion, and perhaps even thrive and rebuild in spite of what is going on around us.

It all hinges on how well we are able to control our costs and preserve our cash. Take a look around your plant. Are you happy with the amount of waste product that's being produced? And the corresponding re-work? How about your plant's output?

Many of us are aware that Canada's productivity is just over 80% that of the U.S., yet we seem blind to financial consequences of it. Particularly with the Canadian dollar at \$0.92 US – a far cry from January 2002 where it was hovering around \$0.62 US, and even March of this year when it was around \$0.77 US. Is our inventory, both raw and semi-finished/finished where it should be? How much is the excess costing in real dollars and eroded cash flow? Is our safety record what it should be, and have we done everything we can to minimize our WCB costs and other insurance premiums?

More than ever this is the time to evaluate what we do, and how we do it. And this is where our expertise really pays dividends! There are a thousand questions to be asked. The answers will determine how we can avoid succumbing to the same fate as our tree, and what you can do to thrive.

Call me, together we can uncover your strategies to thrive.



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